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the thermometer was often up to 85° F. in the shade, but this was no great hindrance. Indeed, few discomforts could much reduce the enjoyment of one so thoroughly appreciative of the great beauty and grandeur of the scenes amid which she toiled, and so capable of perceiving the reality of things—never mistaking petty, unpleasant trifles of the moment, for monstrous misfortunes.

"Such a view as I saw from the Kjøstind my eyes had never rested on before: it alone was worth a longer journey than I had made from England." This sentence is quite typical of the whole book, the tone throughout being one of complete enjoyment. Mrs. Le Blond scorns even to try to make "record ascents" but marches to great heights for the mere love of it; and everywhere and all the time, high up or low down, she perceives a world of beauty and delight which her pen deftly and happily presents. Her senses are keen, her estimates temperate, her judgment well-balanced; in fact this book is simple, frank, sensible and instructive.

Two of the greatest dangers of Alpine climbing are absent in Lapland—the cold and the darkness—and consequently Mrs. Le Blond describes the region as the playground for guileless climbers. There is a clear, brief description of the origin and flow of glaciers, of a thunderstorm (rare above the Arctic Circle) of a practical tent for photographic purposes, and useful remarks about photographic exposures under the feeble rays of the midnight sun, as well as other observations incident to exploration of this kind. There is also a chapter on some Norwegian women, and one on the original occupants of the country, the Lapps, based on the writings of A. H. Keane. F. S. DELLEBAUGH.

Hill Towns in Italy. By Egerton R. Williams, Jr. xiv and 398 pp. With Illustrations from Photographs. Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston and New York. 8vo.

To describe without wearying repetition of phrase and detail no less than forty-three of those remarkable towns which crown the hills of Central Italy between Florence and Rome, and not only to hold the reader's attention through 400 pages but to inspire in him an eager desire to see for himself each and all, is a task of no small difficulty. Such a task well done is this work. It is a clear straight-forward account of his trip, specific enough to be of service to the traveller, and entertaining to him who must travel through books alone. Yet it is more than a traveller's tale, and ought not to be classed with many of that kind; for instead of the usual type, half personal adventure and amusing anecdote, half ill-balanced judgments of wonder and awe, we have here a sober and serious account of things as Mr. Williams found them in the Spring of 1903.

The hill towns may claim the attention of the traveller in three ways. As a geographer he may be interested in their natural setting, as an historian in their long extended and eventful history, or as an artist in their many art treasures. For the geographically minded, Mr. Williams describes with appreciation the strange situation of these towns on the hill tops, the beautiful Umbrian plain at their feet, the bleak highlands of Etruria with their characteristic ravines, and the rivers and passes of the Apennines, and he does not neglect to show how these geographical forms have conditioned the progress and decay of the towns. As his travelling was largely done in a carriage, a sense of the open road and of the oncoming of a beautiful Italian Spring pervades the account.

He is careful to recall those necessary facts of a long and momentous history which make the present remains of a town he is describing live again as in a more glorious past, a past which in many instances can be traced back of the days when Rome was young, to Etruscan times, or even, more ancient still, to Pelasgic days. The tremendous age of these city-centers of civilization, outlasting the empires which have successively governed them, is vividly impressed on the reader in the presence of some bit of ancient wall whose stones still stand as they were placed 4,000 years ago.

But to many the chief attraction of these little towns is the art treasures, more precious than many jewels, to which they form the setting and upon the presence of which they depend, now in their old age, for a livelihood. In this matter Mr. Williams has set forth his intention so well in his preface that I quote:

"It is impossible to speak of the hill towns without speaking of the works of the Renaissance that are bound into their lives. The lines of their palaces are their dress; the glowing tones of the old masters are the colors of their existence. I have tried to avoid profuseness and technicality, and to mention simply, enough of the artistic history of a place to put the reader *en rapport* with its life and appearance; and just enough of the characteristics of the chief painters and their works in the hill towns to show the difference between the Umbrian, Sienese, and Florentine schools, and to indicate the distinctive traits of the masters themselves."

Type and press-work are excellent. The map would be better with more distinct detail and with contour lines of elevation, but, as it is, enables one to follow the author in his wanderings. The thirty odd photographs illustrate so well, that one's only wish is for at least thirty more of the same excellent kind. That of S. Maria delle Pieve in Arezzo would be more useful if placed in the text descriptive of that town instead of Pienza; but errors of carelessness are few, and I have noted only the natural slip of *della* for *del Granduca* (page 221, repeated on page 224) when speaking of the Etruscan tombs near Chiusi,—Clusium it was when Lars Porsena went forth from its walls to do battle with Rome.

STEPHEN A. HURLBUT.

The Conquest of the Isthmus. The men who are Building the Panama Canal, Their Daily Lives, Perils and Adventures. By Hugh C. Weir. xiii and 238 pp., 32 Illustrations and Map. G. P. Putnam's Sons, New York, 1909. \$2.

An interesting, popular, enthusiastic account of the trials and successes attending the digging of the Panama Canal. The chapters showing how the men are fed and housed, how the Zone is policed and how disease has been conquered, give intimate and impressive facts in reference to phases of the canal work that, hitherto, have been little understood in this country. Certain side issues as scorpions, tarantulas and alligators receive, perhaps, more prominence than is appropriate, for the story of the canal digging itself is thereby reduced to a minimum. In fact these phases of life on the Isthmus, which naturally attracted the interest of the writer, are so interlaced with the accounts of the actual engineering operations, that the reader feels a lack of continuity of treatment that is disappointing.

Facts are given from authoritative sources, but the statistics of progress as a whole and by month, close with August, 1908. So much has been done since